Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A ~~computer-implemented~~ method of providing assertions comprising the steps of:

> selling a pool of unallocated time;

> upon request, generating an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime and subtracting the lifetime from the unallocated time; and

> upon request, revoking an assertion and adding any remaining lifetime of the assertion to the unallocated time.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising the further step of eroding unallocated time over time.

3. (Previously presented) A computer implemented system for managing assertions between names and public keys, the system comprising:

> a repository containing an unallocated time, the unallocated time indicating an amount of time available for assertions;

> a purchase component adapted to add a requested bulk lifetime to the unallocated time;

> a request component adapted to, upon generation of an assertion having a requested lifetime, deduct the requested lifetime from the unallocated time; and

> a revocation component adapted to, upon revocation of an assertion having a remaining lifetime, add the remaining lifetime to the unallocated time.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3 wherein each assertion is a public key certificate.

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5. (Original) The system of claim 3 further adapted to:

monitor when the unallocated time falls below a threshold, and

notify a user associated with the unallocated time if the unallocated time falls below the threshold.

6. (Original) The system of claim 3 wherein the request component determines whether the requested lifetime is greater than the unallocated time, and if the requested lifetime is greater than the unallocated time, presents the user with a set of options for remedying the insufficiency of the unallocated time.

7. (Previously presented) A processing platform implemented method of processing a request for an assertion between a name and a public key, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

maintaining an unallocated time, the unallocated time being time available for assertions;

accepting a request for an assertion and a requested lifetime;

determining whether the unallocated time is greater than or equal to the requested lifetime; and

upon determining that the unallocated time is greater than or equal to the requested lifetime, deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 comprising the further step of forwarding the request for an assertion to an entity responsible for generating assertions.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the assertion is a public key certificate.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7 comprising the further step of eroding the unallocated time over time.

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11. (Previously presented) A processing platform implemented method of processing a request for revocation of an assertion between a name and a public key, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

maintaining an unallocated time, the unallocated time being time available for assertions;

identifying an assertion to be revoked, the assertion having a remaining lifetime; and

adding the remaining lifetime to the unallocated time.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the assertion is a public key certificate.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable storage medium, the computer-readable storage medium containing instructions for:

generating an entry in a repository, the entry including an unallocated time;

receiving a request for a purchase of bulk lifetime;

adding the bulk lifetime to the unallocated time[[,]] in the event that a request for a purchase of bulk lifetime is received;

receiving a request for an assertion and a requested lifetime, the assertion being between a name and a public key;

deducting the requested lifetime from the unallocated time[[,]] in the event that a request for an assertion is received;

receiving an identification of an assertion to be revoked, the assertion having a remaining lifetime; and

adding the remaining lifetime to the unallocated time[[,]] in the event that an identification of an assertion to be revoked is received.

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15. (Previously presented) A computer implemented system for allocating assertions comprising:

      means for allocating a pool of unallocated time available for assertion validity;

      means for processing a request for an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime, the means for processing the request subtracting the lifetime from the unallocated time; and

      means for processing a revocation of an existing assertion by determining any remaining lifetime of the existing assertion and adding at least a portion of the remaining lifetime of the assertion to the unallocated time.

16. (Previously presented) The system of claim 15 further comprising:

      means for monitoring when the unallocated time falls below a threshold, and for notifying a user associated with the unallocated time if the unallocated time falls below the threshold.

17. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute [[the]] a method of claim 1 comprising:

      selling a pool of unallocated time;

      upon request, generating an assertion between a name and a public key, the assertion having a lifetime and subtracting the lifetime from the unallocated time; and

      upon request, revoking an assertion and adding any remaining lifetime of the assertion to the unallocated time.

18. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute the method of claim 2. according to claim 17 where in the instructions for execution further comprise:

      eroding unallocated time over time.

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19. (Previously presented)   A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute the method of claim 7.

20. (Previously presented)   A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute the method of claim 9.

21. (Previously presented)   A computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution on a processing platform to execute the method of claim 10.